

To John Bruce

5 Jan 41.

My dear Sir

I wanted to have said a word to you after the Council to-day but you were off before I was aware of your departure.

Although it defeat a favorite project of yours, in which I heartily joined, (I would still join, did not an individual scheme of my own interfere) you will be glad to hear that I am pretty sure of coming to terms with Messrs Whitaker & Co for a new edition of Shakespeare.

W Tomlin was with me

on Sunday to make a formal proposal of £500 for an edition in 8 volumes. I told him that my friends said I ought to have more ~~£40~~ by £100; and so the matter rested as he was to see his principals & let me know.

Yesterday before the meeting of the Council, I saw that he was making up his mind to pull a long face, and he took me aside & said that Messrs Whitaker had pro & con'd the matter with him - that he had done what he could to obtain me the additional £100; but that they would not give it. They were quite willing, he added, to adhere to their original proposition, but ~~that~~ they thought there were so many editions of Shakespeare in the market that they should not be justified in risking more. As it was a capital of £3000

would be involved in the undertaking.

My answer was a very short one - that I would take the £500. The truth is, as I believe I mentioned to you, that I so dout on coupling my name with a substantial edition of Shakespeare, that if Whitakers had come to me & said "We will find printing and paper," but we can do no more," I would have been content to give my labour for nothing.

This you may think strange but it makes the £500 all profit to me.

In a day or two they came to write to me with the formal terms, and I am to send them an answer which will conclude the business.

You were entitled to know how the matter proceeded, & I never can forget the instant & handsome

manner in which you relinquished
your intention, when you found it
was likely to interfere with a plan
by which I might be benefited.

I am still in doubt whether
I ought to have asked it of you; but
I did ask it, and there is an end of
the matter.

Many difficulties will arise
that I do foresee, & many more that I
do not: in ^{or all} any of them I shall resort
without scruple to you and the rest
of my friends. My earnest endeavour
will of course be to make the edition
as good as possible.

Yours very sincerely

J. Payne Collier

24 Brompton Sq.

Jan'y 5th 1841.

Whitaker wish for various
reasons to keep the matter secret
until we are ready to begin.